Kashmir

—a human problem and a moral issue

Speech of

SHEIKH MOHAMMED ABDULLAH

PREFACE

Every year in winter thousands of Kashmiri traders and workers temporarily visit Delhi and other states They come for business and in search of employment.

On 10th of February, 1965, at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, these Kashmiris gave a farewell party to Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, who was in Delhi on his way to *Haj*.

A large gathering of Kashmiris and locals warmly welcomed him and associated themselves with the address that was presented to Sheikh Saheb in Urdu. In this they said :

" We request you to pray in the House of God that He may, in His Mercy, remove the helplessness and agony of the people of Jammu & Kashmir so that they may live with honour and freedom in the land in which He has created them.

"17 years ago the people of this sub-continent were freed from the strangulation and they became masters of their own fate. But in the small and beautiful land of Kashmir this very human right stands denied although it has been recognised by the entire world. The voice of the suppressed humanity of the State has still to be heard, for till now India and Pakistan have been presenting their case on Kashmir from their particular points of view. We request you to state our point of view in the matter. For peace and preservation of freedom in Asia, we hold that friendship and amity between India and Pakistan is the fundamental requisite. This apart, our right of self-determination has its own justification, historically and morally. Viewed in the context of establishing peace and justice in Asia, a satisfactory solution of it is all the more imperative and urgent. Any further delay in its resolution may multiply the complications and create more and more problems

in the body politics of India and Pakistan. The question of human freedom and peace cannot remain shelved nor can it be unilaterally settled or decided by force.

"Our prayers are that God may give us courage to make the land of our birth a happy home for all the human beings who dwell there and are concerned with us."

Sheikh Saheb's reply was in Urdu. Its free translation in English is given in this booklet.

Ali Mohammed Naik

After reciting some verses from the Holi Quran, addressing the gathering, Sheikh Saheb said :

"In performing the *Haj* while a personal obligation would be discharged by us, we are alive to our responsibility to our people as well. It is the belief of a Muslim that prayers are granted during *Haj*. We go with aspirations and prayers of our own, of course, but they are chiefly for the fulfilment of the aspirations and longings of our people. This is one purpose. However, in the time saved, we intend to visit other countries of the world where many would like to know our views about the Kashmir question which has been vexing the world for the last 17 years. We will have to answer. It never has been our wish, nor shall it be, to indulge in any campaign of vilification against the two neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan. I assure all friends who are here or live there in that respect.

"Certain beliefs often become articles of faith for a person. Faith is not changed even during adverse circumstances. May be that sometimes it does not seem evident but he sticks to the path his faith has shown him.

Indo-Pak Amity

"It is our firm belief that the salvation for the 40 lakh people of Kashmir lies, not in the contentions and confrontation between India and Pakistan but in friendship and understanding between them. As long as the conflict remains between them, Kashmiris will continue to be the worst sufferers, for it is they who are stuck in this vortex. The way out for us is if India and Pakistan become friends and their mutual mistrust, fears and suspicions disappear. That such course would be beneficious for both India and Pakistan is obvious. And no one, to whatever school of thought he might be belonging, can question that it is in their friendship and understanding that the path of their progress and peace lies.

"The present international relationships and situations unmistakably point out that for preserving the freedom and security of this sub-continent, cooperative and collective efforts by both are immediate needs. Neither can singly do so. Freedom and security are indivisible. But today there is a race between the two for running down each other which has been proving disasterous as is the experience of the last 17 years. Yet we hardly learn from this. Take, for instance, the problems of external defence and economics. All agree that for their effective settlement cooperative efforts are needed. Last year when the floods devastated us, responsible persons and authorities both in India and Pakistan could not help admitting that such calamities could not be controlled and prevented unless both the countries put in joint efforts to do so. There are so many other matters, both big and small which call for such approach. After all, for hundreds of years they have lived together and there is much in common between them. It is obvious, then, that they cannot live in hate of each other nor can any progress be made if we do so. Hate destroys and negatives creative impulses.

"Now, the people of Kashmir have got entangled in this confrontation between India and Pakistan. Can they be rescued out of it ? It seems to me that so long as the misunderstanding, the mutual suspicion, fears and bitterness between the two do not disappear and real understanding and friendship does not emerge, we cannot be saved.

Discord not Beneficial

"Some friends here, however, exploit sentiments and attempt to create misunderstandings by alleging that in seeking such objectives we desire to strengthen the forces of disruption and discord. Pray think, how can discord benefit Kashmiris? If Indo-Pak relations are further strained and—God forbid—if it comes to clash of arms, Kashmir would be the first casualty, whether you win or Pakistan wins in the end. To wish so would be to commit suicide. How can we wish our home to be an arena—a battle ground—of the two? Obviously, it is not in our interests that

suspicions and fears between India and Pakistan should increase. On the other hand our advantage lies in bringing, so far as we can, these two countries together in understanding and friendship and in the removal of such barriers.

No Yielding To Force

"But what stands in the way of such relationship ? What are the irritants between the two ? If we look at it, the issue of Kashmir confronts us. Now, if you believe in democratic ways, if your conviction is that it is the free will of its members that forms the basis of a free human society and that of democracy, then the simple method is to allow the people of the State to exercise their free will. The settlement has to be the one that is acceptable to the people of that region. Neither India's or Pakistan's decision can be the decision of the people of the State. After all it was on this understanding that the army of India came there. It was on this basis that Gandhiji and Jawaharlalji extended their hand of help to the State in 1947 in order that this right of determining their future be not denied to the people thereof. A situation had arisen then in which the people's right of self-determination seemed being denied. Gandhiji came forward to secure it for us. What was our attitude then ? The people declared that they would rather die than submit before force and give up their right. We did not think ill of Pakistan but we refused to be taken as if we were a piece of property to be acquired in any name-in the name of being Muslims or for any other consideration. We preferred to die rather than be acquired. It was proclaimed that the future of the State shall be the one which its people by their own free will shall determine. In that process they might even vote for Pakistan. But in no case were we ready to accept an imposed decision, for it was the logic of the struggle the people had waged for being masters of their own future and fate. For this they had rendered many sacrifices. Was that to go in vain? And had we to bow before force and superior strength ? We said, No. But we were weak. So we appealed to Gandhiji and Nehru to help us. Their help came, and for what purpose ! To enable the people to exercise

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their free will and take a decision. All this is recent recorded history. This formed the basis of our links with India.

"Now, when some people here raise the voice that this very right, for saving which help had been given, be denied because we are weak, we do not accept that position. They may take it that we shall not bow before force, just as we did not do so before Pakistan. If we submit, might, not right, shall come to be the arbitor of our human affairs.

"It is true that we are a small number of people and don't even have a lathi. It might be asked, 'you are of no consequence and can be done away with by a single bomb'. That is possible. But no one can snatch from us our will to resist, our resolve to live with honour. Our voice may be small and weak, but we shall raise it for the inalienable right of man and his dignity. And it may be left to the posterity to decide who was right and just.

Path of Self-Suffering

"The choice left to us is to accept for ourselves self-sufferings. So, we chose that. In 1953 the Government of India unfortunately took a step, which we think was wrong, of imposing a decision by force. We could not retaliate. So we suffered 11 years' jail patiently but did not submit. Struggle is not waged by force alone. Gandhiji used to say that self-suffering is an effective weapon—more effective than sword, for it alone changes the hearts and mind of people. Take the instance of our relationship with Panditji. We were friends. But he took some steps which we considered were wrong. We silently suffered in jail for 11 years. But the time did come when he realised that it was a wrong policy which he had been pursuing. He changed it. We again met and notwithstanding 11 years of suffering in jail, we felt same affection. This was a great success for us. As there is nothing personal for which I have been struggling, I never have nursed any bitterness and I have never felt/perplexed. So if great and noble causes are to be achieved, you have to go through self-suffering and not allow any bitterness to creep in your minds.

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Kashmiris' Role

"It is true that Kashmir is a small place and its people are poor. But what is great? It is to be a human. I foresee a big role for them. They seem to be endowed with such qualities. I recall to my mind the mad frenzy which had gripped the people of the sub-continent in 1947. It were, however, people of Kashmir who showed the way. Though the circumstances were highly instigating and provocative, he proved his faith in the equality of man and respect for human life. They risked their own lives for protecting the life and honour of their Hindu and Sikh brothers and sisters. And this happened when in the rest of the sub-continent Hindus in Muslim regions and Muslims in Hindu regions felt so insecure. Kashmiris then played a big role in history. This had a tremendous effect in India. It changed the trend. Since then many other tests have come. We have suffered and are still suffering. But what cause can be nobler and greater then that of bringing closer, in love and understanding, the hearts and minds of the millions in India and Pakistan. So let us have the strength to suffer to achieve that end. Let every Kashmiri, wherever he be, do his duty of spreading that understanding and playing that role. You are the messengers of peace and love.

Win the Hearts of the People

"Unfortunately a number of elements in the political field in India have the habit of thinking in terms of Hindus and Muslims. They do not give up this approach. Patiently but firmly we have to make such friends change that outlook without creating any bitterness. They have to understand that no advantage is gained if some go on repeating, parrot-like, day in and day out, that Kashmir belongs to India, "It is ours it is ours." So long as the voice does not come from the hearts of the people of Kashmir, such slogans and claims have no meaning. You may make any laws for Kashmir in your Parliament, they are meaningless unless people of Kashmir accept them. It is the sovereign Parliament of India which has recognised, a number of times, that the accession shall be

determined by the free will of the people of Kashmir. What then can be the meaning of a law passed in derogation of those solemn declarations ? This does not perplex us. For, it is imposing a law at the point of bayonet. Take away the bayonet and see what will happen. You will succeed if you can win the hearts of the people there. No power, no country can retain for all times to come any other land by force of arms. India itself has shown this. It concerns the fundamental principle of its policy.

Kashmir—A Human Problem

"What is our trouble? For us it is not only a political problem in the sense in which India and Pakistan present their respective claims over Kashmir. For the people of the State it is a human problem. Pray look ! For the last 17 years a people have been vivisected, their hearths and homes disrupted. An artificial wall of cease-fire has been raised. This cuts the land in two—nay it is piercing through the hearts of its people-leaving one part of the body on one side and the other on the other side. It keeps separated daughters from mothers, fathers from sons who cannot share each other's joy and grief."

(Sheikh Saheb then referred to the case of a friend of his who had been lying on his death-bed for a number of months. His sons who were students in Pakistan in 1947 got stranded there. The dying man wanted to have a last look at his sons. But in spite of Sheikh Saheb's best endeavours and approaches to Government of India to allow this, his sons were not allowed to come until after the death of the old man.)

He Continued ;

"So thousands of homes and hearths are divided and they have been yearning to be united.

"Uncertainty and unsettled state of minds have paralysed the people. Without political settlement no one likes to invest and take risks. For a major portion of the year communications remain suspended. Prices remain unstable. They soar when communications are suspended- This happens often. The anti-social

elements reap the best advantage. Opportunism flourishes. Our trade and commerce have become a gamble. We live in a cage. What progress can there be when there is no atmosphere of peace, no certainty of future? It is to such situation that 50 lakhs of people have been tethered.

"What do we seek ? We desire that this human problem be resolved peacefully and with understanding. As humans how are we different from you? We are yours and you are ours. How can Kashmir live if India goes down? How can it live if Pakistan goes down? None can live without the other. Kashmir is a small place. But human sufferings are to be commonly shared. All have to walk together or we go down. There is no other way. This ancient sub-continent of India has to play a role for peace in this world. How can it do so if it is divided against itself, is drowned in conflicts and contentions ? How can it contribute towards resolving great human problems in the world if it can't have the vision and courage to settle its own?"

Muslims' Role in Freedom Struggle

"It has surprised me that some persons who claim to be Congresmen since a long time should denounce wholesale the entire community of Indian Muslims and dub them as disloyal. If others would have said so I would not have been pained. But when a person like Shri Morarji Desai blames the entire Indian Muslim community in this way, God save us. Perhaps he has chosen to forget that in the freedom struggle of India, Muslims also have rendered tremendous sacrifices. This community gave you Ansari, Ajmal Khan, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Maulana Azad and hundreds and thousands of others who gave their lives for the freedom of India. And after you decided to partition India, it were they who have been the worst sufferers because of their conviction that Hindus and Muslims should live together. You all know how was Maulana Azad treated and what happened to Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni although they had stood against the fury and fire with fortitude and faith. Theirs was not the success because you let them down. History cannot be forgotten so easily. Who can, in truth, taunt Indian Muslims and ask them to prove their loyalty to India? It is disgraceful.

Had Jan Sangh persons exclaimed against them it would have been understandable for it is their objective. But if Morarji talks in this vein—and it does not befit him, then his place should not be in the Congress. Such things have weakened the Congress which, as in the past, must have a courageous and imaginative leadership. If it has to be loyal to its glorious past, it can't have within it persons who play politics with elements driven by personal interests. Politics should not be played in an organisation like Congress which is charged with great and grave responsibilities. The life, honour and liberty of six crores ef Indian Muslims who are an integral part of the Indian society are its charge. If such is the trend, can Jan Sangh be blamed ?

"There is yet another friend, Shri Chagla, who for ingratiating himself gives sermons to Indian Muslims wherever he goes. Has he cared to know what are their particular problems? I ask him "Dear Sir, where were you when the Indian Muslims were giving their life blood for the independence of India? You assume being their precepter now and single them out for being addressed with your sermons of loyalty. It does not behove you. This is playing to the gallery. You must stop it and talk in a responsible way. Some may applause you momentarily but India would be harmed this way. You are entrusted with a task which you should perform. Why do you interest yourself in matters which are not your responsibility?"

"I hope all friends in India will not be happy by such trends. It is a big country and so many communities professing diverse/faiths live here. Talking in this vein will disunite them and harm India. If some conceive to liquidate Muslims in India, they are in a delusion. It is simply impossible to liquidate, in this persent world, a community of six crores, living in India. No one can do it. If some wish to do so, let them try and see the consequences. The age of jungle law is gone. In the present day world no one can do that. The world is becoming one and its voice counts. Today a country, howsoever powerful, can't grab even a smallest of all countries. To talk in such language is simply madness. May be such cheap slogans and

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methods are resorted to for catching vote. But what after all is a vote? Should you be sacrificing all your principles for getting a vote? Those who do so or think so are doing greatest disservice to India.

India Not To Be Harmed

"However, such trends affect the people of Kashmir also. They don't preach to you. They have a case which is just by itself. Their plea is that the right for which they have been giving tremendous sacrifices be conceded to them. That is a human right. They refused to give it up even when they were asked to do so in the name of Islam. Even now he will not give it up. It is so, not because he has any hate for anyone. On the other hand it is his conviction that it is only a safe and secure India which will secure freedom and security for his small country. He is aware that if India is harmed he will not be spared. Therefore, he would sacrifice his life for India, if need be. At the time of Chinese attack I was in jail. We forgot our misery and I wrote to Panditji expressing our deep anguish. We might have differences among ourselves. But after all India is the homeland of us all. If, God-forbid, India ceases to be India and goes down, how can others be saved? We have to look at all problems from that angle. People of Kashmir have been suffering tremendously. In torment and agony they are torn. Nevertheless they fully realise that if India goes down, nothing of Kashmir might remain. It is in that broad perspective that we look at the Kashmir problem. India and Pakistan both are very big countries as compared to the speck of Kashmir. Should the larger and enlightened interests of such big countries be put at stake at the altar of possession of such a small place? Should all values of decent and civilized living be thrown to winds for getting a little territory?

Alternate Mechanism

"Therefore, while our case is that the pledges given to us that people's free vote shall decide the future affiliation of our and be implemented—and this pledge has been given to us by

the entire world—all the same, if the argument is that plebiscite might release forces of disruption, it deserves consideration. If the fear is that the method—the mechanism of plebiscite—may create or encourage forces of disruption and discord, let us think of an alternate mechanism. Let us think of some way out of this tragic embroilment. Our objective should be that force of concord and amity between India and Pakistan be really released and made to come into play. We do not want India to be thrown against a wall nor do we urge a solution which instead of giving strength to India would weaken it, or bring about disruption instead of peace. What then is the way for that ? Provided there is a will on either side and each is determined to free itself from the shakles of the past and the negative present, it is easy for us to sit together as brothers and discuss and find what is the best way out of the tangle.

Initiative Will Slip Away

"But if the policy is to sit over the question, do nothing for its solution but feel self-satisfied with the cries of a few persons who claim to have finalised the matter, well I can only say that such an attitude is regrettable and unrealistic. With the passage of time initiative will slip away from your hands and if the situation turns into explosive one, we might find it impossible to regain it. One can hardly ignore the fact that the question is very much alive in the hearts and minds of so many people not only here but throughout the world. If you sit over it and think that time will send it to the oblivion it would be a mistake. Just think what happened during the past eleven years. All methods to shelve the issue were employed. Force and money were used, corruption and all possible methods of repression were employed. And to what end? After 11 years, the greatest of all present leaders, Jawaharlal, came to the conclusion that it was a wrong policy. After all a question which has been agitating so many minds could not be unilaterally resolved. So a suffocating atmosphere gave place to one in which the world felt a wind of change. But it was a great misfortune that no sooner had the bridge begun to take shape

the very person who was its architect left us. It was Panditji's ardent desire that this issue, in fact all other questions, be settled in a satisfactory friendly way with Pakistan. He was so eager for this that the very person who had been kept in prison for 11 years was given confidence and trust by him and encouraged to visit Pakistan to pave the way although a number of voices were raised against this move. He, however, had faith in us and wanted that something should be done to break the ice. So, we went there. But perhaps the fates wanted us to wait for sometime more. Panditji left us. But our duty remains. Your duty remains. Many, however, pay only lip service to the great leader who has departed and left us. I ask, are you pursuing that policy ? Let us hold firmly to the threads thereof and be not affected by vain glory of a few.

Avoid Retrogative Steps

"Such things have not paid so far. Let us, therefore, have courage to do the right thing and create and cultivate a climate for understanding. Nothing would be lost. If for some reasons you may not be able to make an advance in this direction just now, at least don't go back and be retrogrades. Don't allow the atmosphere to be vitiated. We can have enough patience for creative trends to take root. Here I would like to appeal to the Press to discourage trends calculated to vitiate the atmosphere and not to play up things which have such tendency. If someone in Pakistan gives vent to his feelings, which we do not like, forthcomes from here counter accusations with greater force. How long is this race for accusation and counter-accusations going to last ? We should have toleration. Can't quiet be kept to allow better understanding to prevail ?

Our Aim

"However, such things cannot last long. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the issue shall be settled. Nothing can prevent that. It has to happen. The question for us, however, is how we want it to happen. If our objective is that the solution should lead to peace and amity in the sub-

continent and towards strengthening it—and that should be our aim—then we should go ahead with caution and care. Delay should not turn us impatient. It can't be ignored that there are elements in this country, as there might be in Pakistan, which are interested in the dispute remaining unresolved, in the perpetuation of tensions and in sharpening of the conflict. Why ? Because they think their small interests are served thereby. They do not keep before themselves larger and enlightened interests of country but think of their own petty interests by running down the one and boosting up the other. They like to play their game by using this issue. Such practices should not discourage us. We must, with faith in us, courageously and constructively pursue the attainment of the noble ideal of justice, peace and understanding.

No Vilification

"You have, in your address, asked me to place the view point of Kashmiris before the world when I visit other countries. I shall do so. But what shall I say ? I want to make it clear that it is far from my mind to indulge in any sort of campaign or vilification against any country. How can I vilify my ownself, my own brother ? So wherever I go I shall try to place the view point of Kashmiris before my listeners and request them to look at the question not only from the angle of India's case or Pakistan's claim but from the point of view of Kashmiris as well. It is human problem with us, a moral issue. It shall be my endeavour to present the Kashmir problem from that level. I trust that your prayers and blessings shall be with me.

Beware of Provocation

"May be attempts will be made in our absence to create provocative situations. I would request you not to be provoked. Kashmir has become a prison for its people. The civil liberties have been denied. Meetings and assemblings have been banned and not even a slogan is allowed to be raised. If one does, quick falls the axe of D.I.R. on the pretext that the India's defence is weakened. Permission has to be got for each public meeting. All such limitations and restrictions though annoying

and provoking have to be borne with. And I appeal to you to bear with them. It is not in our programme to violate such restrictions. We all have to beware of designs of some to create confusion in order to drown the issue in its maze and dust. This was done in the past. But I have not lost faith in man. I am sure that a time does come when passions subside, prejudices vanish and confusions clear up and human affairs get viewed in the proper human perspective. It is my faith that all friends in India shall look at the problem from that angle. It is a problem in which all of us have been entangled in various degrees. Let us then think over it dispassionately and objectively and reach together at a satisfactory solution. To my people in Kashmir I would appeal to maintain peace at all costs. Peace is so essential for attaining peace. It is a condition for creating a proper atmosphere for understanding and negotiations. I am sure that you shall busy yourselves in such constructive approaches and not get provoked.

Congress Unit :

"In Kashmir the issues are so well defined that no amount of prevarications can possibly confuse the public mind. National Conference might be buried and the Congress flag hoisted over its grave. It will not matter much. People are so clear-minded there. They ask you—and rightly so—with what objective in view are you opening a Congress unit in the State ? If the object is to liquidate the entity of the State and merge it—objectives which have been proclaimed—well, it is natural that people will have nothing to do with such a move. This goes counter to their moral consciousness. They feel that this way the very goal for reaching which they have rendered so many sacrifices in the past is being blocked. How will they support you? They feel that this is yet another imposition upon them. They believe in democracy. They believe in freedom and they believe in having their own institutions and in making them with their own efforts and according to their genius. You are going to foist an organisation which has had no roots there. Why? Because some have led you to make Kashmir an issue of party politics so that Congress can't extricate itself. If country's

best interests are to be served, the question of Kashmir cannot be turned into election issue and that of party politics. Are the ideals of the Congress to be thrown to winds?

"Then who are the persons who have been asked to start this new experiment? Are they not the very persons whose conduct has led to the burial of their own organisation by their own hands? What esteem and respect can they command from the people? If, therefore, the people are not attracted to this, who is to be blamed?

Distress and Anguish

"We are not concerned if some clever persons want to start a new venture of exploitation, this time in the name of Congress. If there is enough money here and it is not required for the people here, go on being exploited. The very persons who were given by you money to the tune of nearly 70 crores so far, are now victims of yourpr osecution. You create Frankenstein to kill him. You may please yourselves to have yet another experiment. I have no right to advise you. But sometimes I cannot prevent myself from giving expression to deep pain and grief over what is happening in India. In my own humble way I also had worked for the freedom and honour of India. I also had wished to see the day when ignorance, poverty, hate and chaos would have vanished and the dignity of man restored. Imagine 70 crores of rupees coming from our poor tax-payers gone to gutters! What a sin! Had the purpose been to alleviate the lot of Kashmiris, things would have been different today. But that was not the purpose. Now a few persons have been selected to be the scapegoats of blame for such tremendous waste of people's money. Can the sin be washed away this way ?

"I learn strings of non-official coffers have been opened to dupe the public opinion. Well, this way nothing will be achieved. Without a slightest trace of bitterness in my mind, I assure you that such tactics will not pay. On the other hand they will bring disaster. It was my duty to caution you. I warned you 11 years ago You did not heed till events proved me correct. Is the experiment to be repeated? Do it by all means. But the disaster

will be greater than it has been.

"Some friends are angry with me. Yes, they will be so for telling the plain facts. I request them to understand my distress, feel my anguish, feel for the man who having given all his life for a particular ideal sees before his very eyes the edifice destroyed, the ideals slaughtered and a void created. And by whom? By some of the persons who have been professing faith in those ideals. Men lose the heights by clipping the very wings which had brought them there. Can't you see my anguish when I see the very forces raising their ugliness.

Kashmir—A Laboratory

"I, who was one of the few to take a stand against the fire of communal frenzy and conflagration of hate and for that I have suffered, was endeavouring to make Kashmir a laboratory, an example of human love and brotherhood, an abode where any person irrespective of his being Muslim, Hindu or Christian or Sikh could live in love and harmony. This was the ideal, the edifice, we were building when you stabbed me in the back and destroyed the very frame of it. Imagine what has befallen me. Now, this is my dream. I have lived for it and I shall live for it. That gives meaning to life. May be this dream will not come true. May be I may not see the success of these ideals. But the time shall come when walls of mental separation, barriers of hate and suspicion and coldness of selfish pursuits shall vanish and man shall meet the man.

Appeal

"I trust that my people shall continue to understand me. I am grateful to them for the love they give me. So much was done to beguile them to misunderstand me and reject me. They suffered but did not yield. Today I am amongst them again and they sustain me by the love they give. My appeal to friends in India and Pakistan is to understand our misery, to know our agony and not withhold from me and people of state the warmth of human heart. May they open their minds and hear the voice of a suppressed humanity.

"My words may sometimes sound unpalatable. But behind their seeming sharpness is and shall be the motive to arouse the consciousness and give a shake up from the complacency. It is in our nature as human beings to be remiss and apathetic. So a little pungancy without any element of hate in it, is sometimes needed to awaken us up. I am sure I shall not be misunderstood on that account.

"We are, and shall be, following with all the courage at our command the ideal we have set before us. coming out of jail after 11 years, I had given a pledge to my friend who has left me. I had given him my word that I shall pursue relentlessly the objective I have chosen for my life. He has left me and I feel a void. But I am not disappointed. God willing we shall build the bridge of understanding and love between India and Pakistan. We shall see this bridge of hearts between millions of our brothers and sisters in this sub-continent and may be under it the agonised Kashmiris shall find peace of their homes.

"On behalf of my wife, my colleagues and myself I thank you again for the warm welcome and the farewell you gave. May God keep you safe.

"Thank you."

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